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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to ascertain the nature and extent of specific classroom activities utilized by a group of Florida A & M University faculty members to address problems associated with desegregation and understanding of various ethnic groups. Data were gathered through the administration of a continuum type questionnaire to 62 instructors. Findings indicated that professors lectured to students about desegregation and race related issues. They reported that they felt individuals should be given equal opportunities for education but they do not tend to inflate grades of ethnically different students to achieve this goal. Professors felt they are neither more lenient nor more strict when evaluating students of different ethnic backgrounds and that they set the same standards for all students regardless of ethnicity. The questionnaire and responses are appended. (Author/MK)

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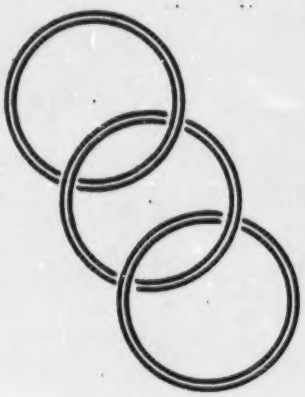

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES THAT ADDRESS PROBLEMS RELATED TO DESEGREGATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF VARIOUS ETHNIC GROUPS AT FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

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OVERVIEW

The use of classroom activities has been one medium for addressing the problems associated with desegregation and understanding of various ethnic groups at Florida A & M University. In veiw of this, this study was designed to ascertain the nature and extent of specific classroom activities utilized by a select group of FAMU faculty members to address these concerns. Only the most conspicuous kinds of data were sought and are reported herein.

METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study was comprised of all faculty members within the College of Education. Faculty members from departments within various colleges and schools at Florida A & M University who teach support courses to teacher education majors were also invited to participate. Such departments included Languages and Literature, Mathematics, History, Psychology, Sociology, Physics, and Biology. Overall, a total of 128 subjects were selected to participate in the study.

The data-gathering instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher (see Appendix A). The 25-item questionnaire required only that the respondent circle a letter that described his/her response on a continuum type scale. Space was provided at the end of the questionnaire for each respondent to offer additional comments pertaining to individual items or the overall instrument. The time required to respond to the entire instrument ranged from ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes.

Of the instruments sent out, approximately 48% (62) were received in time to be utilized in the study.

TREATMENT OF THE DATA

Participants (in the study) were asked to circle a letter on the 25-item instrument which best described their responses on a scale ranging from "A" to "E." The categories of the scale included: to a large extent, to a moderate extent, very little, none at all, and does not apply, respectively. A tally of the responses of the 128 subjects was recorded on the tally sheet (see Appendix B). The percent of responses was computed and recorded on an unused questionnaire according to item number and A, B, C, D, E categories (see Appendix A). Findings of the study were based upon these percentages.

FINDINGS

The instrument designed to ascertain classroom activities used by FAMU professors that address problems related to desegregation and understanding of various ethnic groups included 25 items describing various practices ranging from lecturing to simulated experiences in multicultural environments. An overview of the responses submitted by 62 faculty members for each item on the questionnaire is given below:

Item 1: To what extent have you lectured to students in your classes about desegregation in higher education?

With respect to the extent that professors have lectured to their classes about desegregation issues, they tended to indicate that use of the lecture approach ranged from a large extent to very little. In fact, 43% of the responses fell in these categories with about an equal spread among them. Sixteen percent of the respondents indicated that they had not used the lecture approach in this regard. Another 19% agreed that this item did not apply to their classroom situation. For an item-by-item presentation of the percentages for each category, see Appendix A.

Item 2: To what extent have you encouraged students to freely discuss problems related to desegregation and ethnicity?

Relative to item 2, 50% of the respondents tended to encourage students to freely discuss these problems either to a large or moderate extent. Another 15% indicated very little while only 10% indicated none at all. Thus, 65% of the respondents have encouraged students to freely discuss desegregation and ethnicity issues in their classes.

Item 3: To what extent have you stresses the importance of all individuals, regardless of their ethnic heritage, to have equal opportunities for education?

An analysis of the returned instrument revealed that 52% of the professors have stressed the importance of all individuals to have equal opportunities to education either to a large or a moderate extent. Ten percent of the respondents pointed out that they have not stressed this point at all in their classes. Another 10% indicated that this statement did not apply to their situation.

Item 4: To what extent have you designed some of your lessons with the purpose of improving understanding of various ethnic groups?

It is noteworthy to point out the 66% of the professors tended to indicate agreement on item 4 either to a large extent, a moderate extent, or very little. In fact, 11%, 31%, and 24%, respectively, agreed that they have designed lessons for the purpose of improving understanding of various ethnic groups. Conversely, only 8% indicated that they had not designed some of their lessons with this purpose in mind.

Item 5: To what extent have you been more lenient in your standards in evaluating students of a different ethnic background from yours?

Professors were relatively affirmative in agreeing that they had not been more lenient in their standards in this regard. Forty-four percent of the respondents indicated that

they had not relaxed their standards when evaluating students of a different ethnic background from theirs. However, 19% indicated that they had been more lenient but only to a degree categorized as "very little." Only 5% and 3% indicated that they had been more lenient to a large extent and to a moderate extent, respectively.

Item 6: To what extent have you been more strict in your standards in evaluating students of a different ethnic background from yours?

There was a general consensus of responses between item 5 and item 6. Forty-eight percent, compared with 44% in item 5, of the respondents indicated that they had not been more strict in evaluating the students described above. Fifteen percent compared with 19% in item 5, indicated that they had been more strict to a "very little" degree. Only 2% in the category "to a moderate extent" indicated that they had been more strict in evaluating students of a different ethnic background from theirs. In both items 5 and 6, 15% of the respondents indicated that these items did not apply to them.

Item 7: To what extent have you given extra individualized help to students whose spoken and/or written English is "non-standard?"

With respect to the extent that professors have given extra individualized help to students whose spoken and/or written English is "non-standard," responses tended to accumulate in the categories "to a large extent" and "to a moderate extent." In fact, 27% responded affirmatively in the former category and 24% in the latter. Five percent of the respondents indicated that they help these students "very little" while 8% indicated "none at all." The extent that professors have given extra individualized help appears to be significant.

Item 8: To what extent have you discussed in class the problems in the community which involve minority groups?

Generally, there was an equal spread of responses by professors on the instrument ranging from "large extent" to "does not apply." There was no clear choice or choices of the alternatives; however, the category "to a moderate extent" received 29% of the responses. The percent of responses ranged from 8 to 29 with an equitable spread throughout the continuum. The extent that professors have discussed in class the problems which involve minority groups is unclear.

Item 9: In classes that are racially heterogeneous, to what extent have you encouraged a seating arrangement that mixes individuals of different ethnic groups?

The class choices of responses for this item were "none at all and "does not apply." Twenty seven percent of the professors responded affirmatively to the former and 34% responded affirmatively to the latter. Three, ten, and five percent of the professors responded "to a large extent," "to a moderate extent," and "very little," respectively. The extent that professors have encouraged a seating arrangement that mixed individuals of different ethnic groups was in favor of "none at all."

Item 10: To what extent have you attempted to adopt your classroom decorum to the kinds of disciplines that members of your ethnic group are accustomed to in their respective environments?

The responses indicated by the professors on the instrument were equitably distributed. No clear choice or choices of the alternatives were evident; however, the tendency of the responses was in favor of the alternative "none at all." The extent that professors have attempted to adapt their classroom to the kinds of disciplines that members of their ethnic groups are accustomed to in their respective environments is unclear.

Item 11: To what extent have you attempted to adapt your classroom decorum to the kinds of disciplines that members of ethnic groups different from yours are accustomed to in their respective environments?

Thirty one percent of the professors indicated that they have not attempted to adapt their classroom decorum to the kinds of disciplines referred to in item 11. Fifteen percent, however, responded "very little;" eleven percent responded "to a moderate extent;" and two percent "to a large extent." While no clear pattern of responses was established, it appears as though professors tended not to adapt their classroom decorum. Twenty one percent of the respondents indicated that this item did not apply to them.

Item 12: To what extent have you altered your teaching <u>methodology</u> to accommodate students whose English is considered non-standard?

Relative to item 12, 61 percent of the respondents indicated that they had altered their teaching methodology either to a large extent, or moderate extent, or very little. The percents computed were 16, 19, and 26, respectively. Only 10% indicated that they had not altered their teaching methodology while 6% agreed that this item did not apply to their situation. The extent that professors have altered their teaching methodology to accommodate students whose English is considered non-standard appears to approach a relative degree of significance.

Item 13: To what extent have you altered your teaching materials to accommodate students whose English is considered non-standard?

Generally, there was an equal spread of responses by the professors on the continuum ranging from "A" to "E." No clear choice or choices of the alternatives were evident; however, if the percent of responses for the first three alternatives (large extent, moderate extent, very little) were combined, forty eight percent of the professors would fall in the category of having altered their teaching materials to some degree. This is compared with 32% of the professors who responded "none at all" and "does not apply." The extent that professors have altered their teaching materials to accommodate students whose English is considered non-standard is uncertain.

Item 14: To what extent have you emphasized that all American citizens, regardless of their ethnic background, should acquire a single, basic American culture?

In regard to item 14, twenty nine percent of the professors indicated that they had emphasized that all American citizens should acquire a single, basic American culture either to a large or a moderate extent. Another 29% indicated that they had not emphasized this premise at all. Based upon these data, professors were generally equally divided on this issue.

Item 15: To what extent have you sponsored classroom projects, workshops, or panel discussions to improve undesirable relations between different ethnic groups?

It is important to point out that thirty two percent of the professors responded "none at all" to this item while another 26% indicated that this item did not apply to their situation. Eight percent responded "to a large extent," three percent responded "to a moderate extent," and 13% responded "very little." The extent that professors have sponsored classroom projects, workshops, or panel discussions to improve undesirable relations between different ethnic groups appears negligible.

Item 16: To what extent have you tended to inflate grades of minority students in order to encourage them to seek advanced educational opportunities?

The clear choice of alternatives of the professors in regard to item 16 was "none at all." In fact, 90% of the respondents indicated that they tend not to inflate grades of minority students in order to encourage them to seek advanced educational opportunities. Only three percent of the sampled population responded "to a large extent" to this item

while another two percent indicated "to a moderate extent." The tendency of professors to inflate grades was clearly in favor of none at all.

Item 17: To what extent have you emphasized that minorities should receive "more than an equal chance" to educational opportunities to make up for the educational poverty they suffered in the past?

The spread of responses to this item was somewhat equitable throughout the continuum; however, higher percentages tended to cluster in the categories "to a moderate extent," "very little," and "none at all." The range of responses in these categories was from 13 to 29 percent. While there was about an equal distribution of responses, the extent that professors have emphasized that minorities should receive "more than an equal chance" to educational opportunities to make up for the educational poverty they suffered in the past was in favor of the alternative "very little."

Item 18: To what extent have you emphasized that students of a minority ethnic background should be expected to obtain the same standards in your class as students of the majority ethnic background?

Professors have emphasized to a relatively high degree that all students, regardless of their ethnic background, should be expected to attain the same standards in their classes. In fact, 29 percent of the sampled population responded "to a large extent." Another 27% responded "to a moderate extent." Only 6% responded "very little" while another 6% responded "none at all."

Item 19: To what extent have you emphasized that classroom activities should focus on subject-matter goals and problems pertaining to desegregation and ethnic relations should be left to individuals or agencies outside the classroom?

With respect to item 19, the responses of the professors tended to be scattered throughout the continuum. The alternative receiving the highest percent of responses (32) was "none at all." However, six percent of the professors responded "to a large extent;" ten percent responded "to a moderate extent;" and fifteen percent responded "very little."

Ultimately, this means that respondents were almost evenly divided positively and negatively on this item considering the combination of alternatives A, B, and C as positive. Chances are that some of the professors did not wish to "give up" time from subject matter goals to discuss

these issues while others may have felt just the opposite.

Item 20: To what extent have you used audio visual aids to demonstrate significant accomplishments by members of minority ethnic backgrounds?

There was no clear choice or choices of the alternatives for this item according to the responses of the professors. They tended to indicate that the utilization of audiovisual aids ranged from a moderate extent to none at all. It appears as though the average of the responses recorded by the professors would most closely approximate the frequency of use of such materials in their classes. Therefore, the extent that professors have used audiovisual aids to demonstrate significant accomplishments by members of minority ethnic backgrounds was in favor of the alternative "very little."

Item 21: To what extent have you encouraged peer tutoring in your class(es) between and among students of different ethnic backgrounds on matters pertaining to desegregation and ethnic relations?

Professors were relatively affirmative in agreeing that they have not encouraged peer tutoring in their classes or this item did not apply to their teaching situation. In fact, 32% of the professors responded "none at all" while another 27% responded "does not apply." Only 3% indicated that they have encouraged peer tutoring in their classes to a large extent; 13% indicated to a moderate extent; and 5% indicated very little. The extent that professors have encouraged peer tutoring in their class(es) between and among students of different ethnic backgrounds on matters pertaining to desegregation and ethnic relations appears negligible.

Item 22: To what extent have you permitted classroom discussions that involve sensitive, controversial issues which exist in higher education about desegregation and ethnicity?

Generally, there was an equal spread of responses by the professors throughout the continuum. The percent of responses ranged from 10 to 21. In fact, 21% of the professors responded "to a large extent;" 21% responded "to a moderate extent;" 10% responded "very little;" 19% responded "none at all;" and 11% indicated that this item did not apply. The extent that professors have permitted classroom discussions that involve sensitive, controversial issues which exist in higher education about desegregation and ethnicity is unclear.

Item 23: To what extent do you feel entirely free of bias against any students you teach without respect to their ethnic or class backgrounds?

Professors overwhelmingly agreed that they feel entirely free of bias against any students they teach without respect to their ethnic or class background. This was substantiated by the fact that 69% of the sampled population responded "to a large extent" to this item. Five percent of the professors responded "to a moderate extent" while another five percent responded "very little." However, two percent of the professors indicated that they did not feel entirely free of bias against students of different ethnic or class backgrounds.

Item 24: To what extent do you feel that the course(s) you teach give students sufficient skills to reach pupils of all ethnic backgrounds in Florida schools.

An analysis of the returned instruments revealed that 71% of the professors feel that their course(s) give students sufficient skills to reach pupils of all ethnic backgrounds in Florida schools either to a large or a moderate extent. Conversely, only two percent of the professors indicated an opposite opinion while 8% agreed that this item did not apply to their teaching situation.

Item 25: To what extent do you feel that your professional competency would be enhanced by having actual or simulated experiences in multicultural environments?

Responses by professors to item 25 were erratic throughout the continuum from "A" to "D." The tendency of the responses was in favor of agreeing that professors' competencies would be enhanced by having actual or simulated experiences in multicultural environments. The actual extent of agreement, however, favored the alternative "to a large extent."

SUMMARY

A sample of 62 FAMU professors from the College of Education and the Departments of Languages and Literature, Mathematics, History, Psychology, Sociology, Physics, and Biology completed a 25-item questionnaire about the nature and extent of specific classroom activities utilized to address the problems associated with desegregation and understanding of various ethnic groups. The activities emphasized most by the respondents included lecturing to students about desegregation and encouraging them to freely discuss this issue and problems related to ethnicity in class.

A little more than half of the respondents indicated that individuals should be given equal opportunities for education regardless of their ethnic heritage. An even greater percentage of professors agreed that they had designed some of their lessons with the purpose of improving understanding of various ethnic groups.

In regard to grading standards, professors tended to indicate that they had not been more lenient in evaluating students of a different ethnic background. The findings also suggest that professors had not been more strict in evaluating this same group of individuals.

Greater than 51% of the professors (1) have given extra individualized help to students whose English is considered "non-standard," and (2) have altered their teaching methodology to accommodate these students. However, the respondents indicated that they tend not to inflate grades of minority students to encourage them to seek advanced educational opportunities.

About two-thirds of the sampled population have emphasized that all students should be expected to attain the same standards in their classes. About the same percent of respondents agreed that they feel entirely free of bias against any students they teach without respect ot ethnic or class background. About three-fourths of the respondents felt that their course(s) are sufficient to meet the educational needs of students of all ethnic backgrounds in Florida schools.

The study revealed several activities that professors tended not to emphasize in their classes. Professors did not encourage a seating arrangement that mixed individuals of different ethnic groups; professors tended not to adapt their classroom decorum to the kinds of disciplines that members of ethnic groups different from theirs were accustomed to in their environments; professors did not sponsor classroom projects, workshops, or panel discussions to improve undesirable relations between different ethnic groups; and professors did not encourage peer tutoring between students of different

ethnic backgrounds on matters pertaining to desegregation and race relations.

Several items on the questionnaire received generally an equal spread of responses. Therefore, the findings suggest that the status of these items is unclear or uncertain. The following items fell in this category: (1) the extent that professors discussed in class the problems in the community which involve minority groups; (2) the extent that professors attempted to adapt their classroom decorum to the kinds of disciplines that members of their ethnic groups are accustomed to in their respective environments; (3) the extent that professors altered their teaching materials to accommodate students whose English is considered non-standard: (4) the extent that professors emphasized that all American citizens should acquire a single, basic American culture; (5) the extent that professors emphasized that minorities should receive "more than an equal" chance to educational opportunities to make up for the educational poverty they suffered in the past; (6) the extent that professors emphasized that classroom activities should focus on subject-matter goals and problems pertaining to desegregation and ethnic relations should be left to individuals or agencies outside the classroom; (7) the extent that professors used audio-visual aids to demonstrate significant accomplishments by members of minority ethnic backgrounds; and (8) the extent that professors permitted classroom discussions that involve sensitive controversial issues which exist in higher education about desegregation and ethnicity.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FAMU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
FACULTY MEMBERS AND FACULTY MEMBERS WHO
TEACH SUPPORT COURSES TO TEACHER
EDUCATION MAJORS

NAME (optional) _____ College/School_____

Ethnic Classification (circle) Division_____

Black/White/Other Department_____

---

*Number of students enrolled in your class(es) this quarter according to ethnic classification:

_____Black _____White _____Other

Please respond to the following items in your capacity as a faculty member at Florida A&M University. The items are designed to ascertain classroom activities that address problems related to desegregation and understanding of various ethnic groups. Most items require only that you circle a letter which best describes your response. Space is provided at the end of the questionnaire for you to offer additional comments pertaining to individual items or the overall questionnaire.

NOTE: NUMBERS UNDER THE ALTERNATIVES ARE PERCENTS.

	A. To a large extent	B. To a moderate extent	C. Very little	D. None at all	E. Does not apply
1. To what extent have you lectured to students in you class(es) about desegregation in higher education?	15	15	23	16	19

	A. To a large extent	B. To a moderate extent	C. Very little	D. None at all	E. Does not apply
2. To what extent have you encouraged students to freely discuss problems related to desegregation and ethnicity?	23	27	15	10	10
3. To what extent have you stressed the importance of all individuals, regardless of their ethnic heritage, to have equal opportunities for education?	29	23	2	10	10
4. To what extent have you designed some of your lessons with the purpose of improving understanding of various ethnic groups?	11	31	24	8	21
5. To what extent have you been more lenient in your standards in evaluating students of a different ethnic background from yours?	5	3	19	44	15
6. To what extent have you been more strict in your standards in evaluating students of a different ethnic background from yours?	2	2	15	48	15
7. To what extent have you given extra individualized help to students whose spoken and/or written English is "non-standard?	27	29	5	8	11
8. To what extent have you discussed in class the problems in the community which involve minority groups?	11	29	18	8	16

	A. To a large extent	B. To a moderate extent	C. Very little	D. None at all	E. Does not apply
9. In classes that are racially heterogeneous, to what extent have you encouraged a seating arrangement that mixes individuals of different ethnic groups?	A 3	B 10	C 5	D 27	E 34
10. To what extent have you attempted to adapt your classroom decorum to the kinds of disciplines that members of your ethnic group are accustomed to in their respective environments?	A 11	B 8	C 15	D 21	E 15
11. To what extent have you attempted to adapt your classroom decorum to the kinds of disciplines that members of ethnic groups different from yours are accustomed to in their respective environments?	A 2	B 11	C 16	D 31	E 21
12. To what extent have you altered your teaching <u>methodology</u> to accommodate students whose English is considered non-standard?	A 16	B 19	C 26	D 10	E 6
13. To what extent have you altered your teaching <u>materials</u> to accommodate students whose English is considered non-standard?	A 10	B 17	C 21	D 19	E 13
14. To what extent have you emphasized that all American citizens, regardless of their ethnic background, should acquire a single, basic American culture?	A 13	B 16	C 15	D 29	E 10

	A. To a large extent	B. To a moderate extent	C. Very little	D. None at all	E. Does not apply
15. To what extent have you sponsored classroom projects, workshops, or panel discussions to improve undesirable relations between members of different ethnic groups?	8	3	13	32	26
16. To what extent have you tended to inflate grades of minority students in order to encourage them to seek advanced educational opportunities?	3	2	13	50	13
17. To what extent have you emphasized that minorities should receive "more than an equal chance" to educational opportunities to make up for the educational poverty they suffered in the past?	8	13	21	29	5
18. To what extent have you emphasized that students of a minority ethnic background should be expected to attain the same standards in your class as students of the majority ethnic background?	29	27	6	6	15
19. To what extent have you emphasized that classroom activities should focus on subject-matter goals and problems pertaining to desegregation and ethnic relations should be left to individuals or agencies outside the classroom?	6	10	15	32	16

	A. To a large extent	B. To a moderate extent	C. Very little	D. None at all	E. Does not apply
20. To what extent have you used audiovisual aids to demonstrate significant accomplishments by members of minority ethnic backgrounds?	A 2	B 16	C 10	D 11	E 8
21. To what extent have you encouraged peer tutoring in your class(es) between and among students of different ethnic backgrounds on matters pertaining to desegregation and ethnic relations?	A 3	B 13	C 5	D 32	E 27
22. To what extent have you permitted classroom discussions that involve sensitive, controversial issues which exist in higher education about desegregation and ethnicity?	A 21	B 21	C 10	D 19	E 11
23. To what extent do you feel entirely free of bias against any students you teach without respect to their ethnic or class background?	A 69	B 5	C 5	D 2	E 2
24. To what extent do you feel that the course(s) you teach give students sufficient skills to reach pupils of all ethnic backgrounds in Florida schools?	A 53	B 18	C 5	D 3	E 8
25. To what extent do you feel that your professional competency would be enhanced by having actual or simulated experiences in multicultural environments?	A 31	B 15	C 21	D 15	E 5